

Toby to the Rescue

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Summary: When the port at Knapford is being rebuilt, Toby must work with lazy Dennis.

Toby to the Rescue

A few weeks after the fire, Toby was bringing his usual train of stone down to Knapford Port. When Toby arrived, he saw men working on the damaged dock, but he also saw men working on the west quay. Stones were being placed for an expansion of the dock, and rails and sleepers were stacked nearby.

"Well, bless my bell," he muttered, "what's going on here?"

It was then the Fat Controller drove over in Winston, jolting along before coming to a stop, just before the workmen's barrier. "Ah, Toby. Good. Now, I've been in contact with the port manager, and we've both agreed that the west quay needs expanding."

"Does that mean more stone will be needed, sir?" asked Toby.

"That's right," affirmed the Fat Controller. "I'll have Dennis come up and help you with the extra stone traffic. I'm positive the two of you can get this job done quickly."

But Toby wasn't sure. He knew that Dennis could be rather lazy, and often made excuses to get out of work. That afternoon as Toby arrived at Ffarquhar quarry, he saw Dennis sitting in a siding. There were a lot of trucks sprawled along the sidings.

"Dennis," Toby inquired, "have you done any work?"

"I shunted those trucks over there," replied Dennis, looking over at where three hoppers were sitting next to the chute. "But they were very heavy, and I feel so sore. Can you shunt the rest of these trucks for me, Toby?" Toby sighed, but went about arranging two long

trains of stone regardless. But Dennis still wasn't ready. "My radiator needs to cool. Can you take my train with you, Toby?"

"You lazy diesel," muttered Toby, but since Dennis had refused to move, Toby had no choice but to take the two trains at once.

Later that afternoon, Toby had brought the long train into the port, and was having a much needed drink at the water tower when the Fat Controller arrived.

"Thank you for bringing these trucks here, Toby," he began, "but where's Dennis? he was meant to have helped you."

"Oh, he said his radiator needed to cool," replied Toby.

And so the Fat Controller drove to the Ffarquhar quarry. When he arrived, he found Dennis moving out of his siding and shunting some trucks together.

"Oh, good afternoon, sir," he greeted kindly. "What are you doing here?"

"Toby told me you couldn't pull your trucks because your radiator needed cooling."

"Oh, he would say that," muttered Dennis, lying through his teeth, "he just wanted to get praise for bringing all the trucks in at the same time."

The Fat Controller nodded and walked away. He knew Dennis would often make excuses, and he also knew that Toby wouldn't do something like what Dennis had described. But he wasn't sure, not just yet. And I'm sorry to say that Dennis' excuses continued on. One day his brakes had jammed on. Another day he was low on fuel. This went on and on until Toby lost patience. One night, while Toby was in the shed, he spoke to Mavis.

"How am I meant to get that lazy diesel to do some work for a change?" he groaned.

Mavis thought for a moment. And then an idea came to her. "Aren't the new bricks for the warehouses being brought in tomorrow?" she asked. "If you went and collected them, and I stayed here to work with Henrietta, then Dennis would have to pull his train."

"Good idea, Mavis! I'll ask the Fat Controller if I can go first thing tomorrow morning."

And he did. When Dennis awoke the next morning, he was surprised to see Mavis coupling up to Henrietta.

"Isn't Toby meant to collect the quarry workers?" he asked, oiling out of the shed. "Speaking of which, where is Toby, anyway?"

"He went down to Tidmouth Harbour to fetch a shipment of bricks," explained Mavis. "The ship won't be here for a few hours yet, but he's gone ahead so he'll be early."

"Oh. Ooh, my wheels are aching. Mavis, can you help me-"

"Nope. Sorry, Dennis, but you'll have to shunt those trucks on your own."

And Mavis left, leaving Dennis alone. He felt very cross that he had to do the work on his own, and took that anger out on the trucks. By the time the train was all shunted, the trucks were cross with Dennis, and wanted to pay him out.

"Let's wait until Toryreck," the lead truck whispered, "then we'll teach him a thing or two!"

The trucks behaved well for most of the journey, and Dennis was beginning to enjoy himself. This isn't so bad, he thought. But once he reached the junction to the port, the trucks began pushing.

"Go on! Go on!" they sang, surging into Dennis.

"Oh! Stop that!" yelled Dennis. He tried braking, but it did no good.

At Knapford Port, the base for the foundation was filled with a few rocks, and the workmen were waiting for Dennis to bring the rest of them down. Then Dennis came charging in, brakes squealing and trucks laughing loudly. The men rushed out of the way as Dennis tumbled down onto the stones below. His sudden arrival had upset the barriers holding back the sea water, and soon water began seeping up around him.

Meanwhile, Toby brought his bricks into Knapford yard, and was just being uncoupled when the alarm bell rang. "There's been an accident at the port!" a workman shouted. "Dennis has fallen off the edge of the quay!"

"Oh dear!" said Toby to himself. "I must go and help!"

Toby hurried away to Jerome and Judy's siding, and once he was coupled on, he hurried away to Knapford port as fast as he could. At the port, the water was now up to Dennis' footplate, and his generators had shorted out. The Fat Controller had arrived on Thomas to see what had happened. Thomas had just moved the trucks out of the way when Toby arrived.

"I got here as soon as I could," he panted.

"Excellent, Toby," replied the Fat Controller. "I want you to move Jerome closer to the edge and hold him there until he's recovered Dennis."

And so Judy and the Works Unit coach were moved onto a siding, and Toby and Jerome got as close as they could to the edge of the quay. Some workmen attached strong chains to Jerome's hook and wrapped them underneath Dennis. Everyone watched as the chains were finally secured.

"Take it easy, Jerome," called Judy.

Slowly but surely, Dennis was lifted off the rocks, and placed onto the rails next to Jerome. The Fat Controller came forward, and he didn't look happy.

"Now, Dennis," he began, "this is what happens to you when you make excuses." Dennis sighed and looked down at his buffers. "Thomas, I want you to take Dennis to the yard, where he shall stay until further notice." Thomas was coupled up, and dragged Dennis away. "Toby, I'm very proud of you for acting so quickly."

"Yes, well done, Toby!" commented Jerome.

Toby blushed modestly. "Oh, it was nothing, sir."

Later that day, once the barriers were refitted and the water drained out of the base, Toby spent the rest of the day moving trucks about. Dennis, on the other hand, was left in a shed at Knapford yard, with signs on his front and side saying "NOT TO BE MOVED". I bet now he wished he wasn't so lazy, don't you?

End
file.